



May 25, 2026 – Dinamani Newspaper – Tit bits

1. India–US Trade Agreement

India and the United States have decided to finalize the much-awaited bilateral trade agreement at the earliest.

- (i) This decision was taken during detailed talks held in Delhi between S. Jaishankar and Marco Rubio.
- (ii) India–US relations had faced setbacks over the past year due to the policies of US President Donald Trump regarding trade, import tariffs, immigration, and visas.
- (iii) In an effort to restore bilateral ties, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio arrived in India on a four-day official visit.
- (iv) During the discussions, S. Jaishankar conveyed India's concerns regarding the Trump administration's changes in visa and immigration policies.
 - Indian professionals have been affected by measures such as the steep increase in H-1B visa fees and the new immigration rules introduced by the Trump administration. Concerns have also been raised over the strict requirement that applicants for US Green Cards (permanent resident cards) must return to their home country and apply from there.
 - Responding to these concerns, Rubio stated: "More than 20 million people have entered the United States illegally in recent years, leading to an immigration crisis. This is not caused by India alone; it is a broader issue. To address this challenge, we are reforming the immigration system. During this reform period, there may be some difficulties and inconsistencies. However, an efficient system will ultimately benefit all stakeholders."

2. Ebola Outbreak in Africa

Amid a rising Ebola outbreak in parts of Africa, the Indian Government has advised citizens to avoid non-essential travel to the affected countries.

- (i) This advisory was issued after the World Health Organization declared the Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda a Public Health Emergency of International Concern.
- (ii) More than 100 people have died and over 600 have been infected due to the rapidly spreading Ebola virus in Congo and Uganda.
- (iii) Apart from Congo and Uganda, neighboring countries such as South Sudan are also suspected to have reported the spread of the virus.
- (iv) In an official statement, the Indian Government advised Indians to avoid unnecessary travel to Congo, Uganda, and South Sudan. Those currently residing in or traveling to these countries have been instructed to strictly follow health guidelines and safety measures.
- (v) People have also been asked to avoid contact with individuals showing symptoms of the disease and to seek immediate medical attention if they develop fever or related symptoms.
- (vi) Ebola is a severe viral hemorrhagic fever with a very high fatality rate.



- No approved vaccine or specific treatment currently exists for the “Bundibugyo” strain of Ebola. However, this strain has not been reported anywhere in India so far.

3. Russia’s Hypersonic Missile Attack on Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that Russia had launched its third attack on Ukraine using the hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile.

(i) The Oreshnik missile is capable of traveling at ten times the speed of sound and can destroy underground structures as deep as four-story buildings. Russian President Vladimir Putin had previously claimed that the missile travels like a meteor and is capable of bypassing any missile defense system in the world.

4. Tamil Nadu Support for Squash Players

Tamil Nadu Minister for Public Works and Sports Aadhav Arjuna stated that the Tamil Nadu Government would provide all necessary support for squash players to win medals at the 2028 Olympics.

(i) Squash has been included in the Olympics for the first time in the upcoming Games. Of the four players in India’s World Cup-winning squash team last year, three were from Tamil Nadu, which was described as a matter of pride. The next target is to secure Olympic medals, and the Sports Development Department will extend all required assistance for the 2028 Olympics, he said.

5. Decline in Indians’ Overseas Travel Expenditure

According to data released by the Reserve Bank of India, Indians’ expenditure on foreign travel declined to ₹10,043 crore (1.09 billion USD) in March.

(i) Overseas travel expenditure stood at ₹15,790 crore (1.65 billion USD) in January and ₹12,441 crore (1.3 billion USD) in February before declining in March.

(ii) Under the Liberalised Remittance Scheme for individuals, the RBI released data related to foreign travel, overseas education, remittances to relatives, and investments abroad.

- Total overseas travel expenditure by Indians in March declined to 1.09 billion USD. Foreign travel includes international tourism, pilgrimage, medical travel, and education-related travel. Of this, ₹5,962 crore (623.05 million USD), accounting for 57% of total expenditure, was spent on leisure and other travel.
- Spending on overseas education in March stood at ₹4,308 crore (450.16 million USD), while business, medical, and pilgrimage travel accounted for ₹204 crore (21.39 million USD).
- Due to disruptions in crude oil supplies caused by the West Asian conflict and the depreciation of the Indian rupee against the US dollar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently urged Indians to avoid unnecessary foreign travel.
- The Prime Minister stated that reducing overseas travel expenditure would help reduce foreign exchange outflow and stabilize the value of the rupee. Against this backdrop, the decline in overseas travel expenditure during March has been noted.

6. Supreme Court Rejects Tamil Nadu’s Review Petition on Mokedatu Dam

The Supreme Court of India dismissed the review petition filed by the Tamil Nadu Government seeking



reconsideration of its earlier order in the Mokedatu dam case.

(i) A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice Surya Kant rejected Tamil Nadu's request to hear the review petition in open court instead of in the judges' chambers and dismissed the petition.

(ii) On November 22, 2018, the Central Water Commission granted permission to Karnataka Cauvery Neeravari Nigam Limited, a Karnataka Government Undertaking based in Bengaluru, to continue preparing the Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the Mokedatu balancing reservoir and drinking water project. In the same year, the Tamil Nadu Government filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking a stay on that approval.

(iii) The Supreme Court dismissed the petition on November 13 last year. In its order, the Court observed that Karnataka had proposed constructing a dam across the Cauvery River at Mokedatu under the balancing reservoir and drinking water project. Since the matter had already been referred to an expert committee for examination, the Court held that Tamil Nadu's petition was based on a misunderstanding.

(iv) In its review petition, the Tamil Nadu Government argued that neither the final award of the Cauvery Tribunal nor the 2018 Supreme Court judgment had granted approval for the Mokedatu project. Therefore, the Court's order was unacceptable and needed reconsideration.

(v) The review petition was listed for consideration in the judges' chambers on April 15 before Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices K. Vinod Chandran and Vipul M. Pancholi. Tamil Nadu requested that the matter be heard in open court instead, but after reviewing the matter in chambers, the bench dismissed the petition.

7.Recent failure of the international community to reach a consensus on nuclear arms control.

(i) The Failure of the Review Conference

- A four-week conference of member nations was held at the United Nations to review the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).
- Despite the urgent global context—including the war in the Middle East and a rising international arms race—the conference ended without any agreement.
- This lack of consensus is viewed as a significant disappointment for global security efforts.

(ii) History and Objectives of the NPT

- The NPT was established in 1968 and came into effect in March 1970.
- It is a widely accepted global arms control treaty with 191 signatory nations.
- The treaty has three main goals: preventing the spread of nuclear weapons, promoting cooperation in peaceful nuclear energy, and advancing the cause of disarmament.
- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the body responsible for verifying that nuclear technology is used strictly for peaceful purposes.

(iii) Signatories and the Issue of Discrimination

- Major nuclear-armed powers, including the USA, Russia, France, Britain, and China, are signatories to the treaty.
- Nations such as India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea have not signed the treaty.
- India has refused to sign the NPT, characterizing it as discriminatory.



- Under the treaty, non-nuclear nations have the right to develop nuclear technology for civilian and industrial needs, provided they undergo strict inspections.

(iv) Obstacles to Disarmament

- Although the treaty was extended indefinitely in 1995, subsequent review conferences have struggled to make progress.
- A major criticism is that nuclear-armed nations often refuse to discuss or reach concrete agreements regarding the actual reduction of their nuclear stockpiles.
- The 2022 review conference failed primarily due to tensions surrounding the war in Ukraine and Russia's involvement.

(v) The Iranian Deadlock

- The failure of the most recent conference was largely driven by the Iranian nuclear issue.
- The United States accused Iran of violating treaty terms by denying the IAEA access to inspect its nuclear facilities.
- Iran countered by accusing the USA and Israel of carrying out illegal attacks on its nuclear centers and demanded that the conference resolution officially condemn these actions.
- The refusal of both sides to compromise on these points led to the conference's collapse.

(vi) Global Policy Concerns

- USA maintains an extremely strict stance that often prevents non-nuclear nations from accessing technology even for peaceful energy needs.
- While non-nuclear nations face these hurdles, the established nuclear powers continue to avoid meaningful dialogue about reducing their own weapons, leaving the goal of total disarmament unfulfilled.